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# Mediations around an Alternative Concept of "Work": Re-imagining the Bodies of Survivors of Trafficking

#### **Urmimala Sarkar Munsi**

ABSTRACT When I was rescued by the police and put in a shelter home, I felt angry. I did not know any other work. Before, I just had to lend my body and the work got done. I got paid, without having done anything (Poolish jokhon amake uddhar kore Shelter home e dilo, khoob raag hoechhilo. [...]

When I was rescued by the police and put in a shelter home, I felt angry. I did not know any other work. Before, I just had to lend my body and the work got done. I got paid, without having done anything (*Poolish jokhon amake uddhar kore Shelter home e dilo, khoob raag hoechhilo. Ami to aar kono kaaj i jantam na. ami amar shorir ta ke diey i khalash, kaj o hoey jeto, aar amio kono kaaj na kore poisha peye jetam.*) 1

My opening excerpt comes from a series of interviews I conducted with fifteen trafficked women who agreed to give interviews on condition of anonymity. They have brought up repeatedly the issue of "work" and their definition or attitude toward how they see their body as their tool/source of skill.

A large number of websites give detailed explanations and advice on human/sex trafficking and sex slavery. One such website by Soroptimist International of the Americas (which presents itself as "a global volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment" explains sex trafficking/slavery as an exploitative process where:

Women and girls are typically trafficked into the commercial sex industry, i.e. prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation.

Not all slaves are trafficked, but all trafficking victims are victims of slavery. Human trafficking is a particularly cruel type of slavery because it removes the victim from all that is familiar to her, rendering her completely isolated and alone, often unable to speak the language of her captors or fellow victims.

This essay acknowledges that in terms of the day-to-day use of the word "labor" in the context of sex work, a particular configuration of the organization of labor needs to be understood, which includes both sexual and social labor, structured by a set of life constructs, "made up of living and working arrangements, practices, ideas, norms, ideologies, and consciousness that are unique to the sex industry." What intrigues me is, however, a different conceptualization of work (meaning the actual effort of sex as work), which may appear completely theoretical while trying to look at it from an outsider's

perspective, but constructs the basic tenet of "survival" for many such women taking conscious decisions to discontinue with the "work" that was their livelihood.

Sex trafficking may be forced, coercive, or consensual. Usually in the case of survivors of forced trafficking there are greater incidences of direct violence. Symbolic and systemic violence are ingrained within the system of the sex trade, where one person can buy rights to control acts of another person. The interviews I conducted almost all acknowledge the reaction to such violence by the act of the separation of the mind and the body of the sex worker, whose daily "work" routine forces her to keep the realms of the body and the mind as separate as possible as she continues the work of "pleasing." That dissociation produces a certain amount of ability to resist any outsider's control over the mind, even while controlling the body-object and its activities for a while. From the way in which the women I interviewed describe their relationship with their body, they dissociate as a form of resistance which helps the women to create a split between intimate and public space, and also between secret and public behavior. This split actually subverts the definitions of what is intimate or secret by making the mind a secretive and intimately-controlled tool, only available to self-control in defiance to the "public-ness" of sex-as-work that is a commodity and therefore available to the public and accountable as a product. This distance also is strengthened most times through a deep disrespect that the woman has towards her body and the work it does. Sex work assumes a certain skill of providing entertainment and pleasure to the client, on the part of the seller, but actually the biggest skill that this body learns through a series of experiences, often violent and completely subjugating, is to submit to the wishes of the client, and to make available her body for the person who pays for it to use for sexual pleasure. Though the woman is assumed to be in the business, the work itself hardly includes anything that can be seen as her agency. Giving in to the client's wishes is the "work" that the woman is required to learn.

This distance between the body and mind is something that has been talked about by practitioners and activists who work with rehabilitation processes at many levels, and in many geographies. Eve Ensler, in Kolkata for a collaborative program with Kolkata Sanved (December 2014), talked about "One Billion Rising" which exhorts women to dance. Ensler pointed out in an interview in *Telegraph India*, "Statistics say one in three women will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. That makes the figure roughly one billion." In the same interview she also says that after sexual assault the body "becomes a landscape of terror. It alienates the owner from her body. She may hate her body. Yet, how do we get back into the body?" Continuing the conversation, Ensler asserts in the same interview, that dance "helps me live in this thing that I have left—my body... Dance brings us back to our bodies." 5

Violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon, not specifically linked to any particular culture or religion, and the female survivors of different types of violence have to cope with a range of physical and mental damage. Surviving in/with the violated body thus becomes an ongoing process just as crucial as taking the next breath. Ensler's assertions about returning to the body—or to continue to live in it—are what came out as the most important day-to-day struggle for the young women I have interviewed. The toughest journey, for the survivor of extreme alienation, is to return into her own body. For a survivor, emerging from the submissive body and unlearning the auto-submissive mode is in itself a huge and gradual process which more often than not needs outside stimulation and help. Inhabiting that body again with the intent and purpose redefined (and not just using one's body as a tool) is what is the most difficult and lonely process. While this process is "rehabilitation" for the counselor or therapist, it is "re-habitation" for the survivor. If that is negotiated in and through a community—a sharing process with

other surviving bodies—that is what can start the relationship between survivor and her body anew.

In this context, does one refer to the body of a survivor of sex trafficking, as "the victim's body," "the violated body," "the traumatized body," or "the survivor's body?" The arguments between different groups of feminists in India have foregrounded issues of self-determination, perpetual victimization, and a debate between voluntary and coerced prostitution. Giving these arguments their required recognition, I would consciously like to move away from such arguments to the world of the child/teenager/woman who by being forced or coerced to travel to another region/country/territory gets dispossessed of community membership, identity, and citizenship where her only identity and "choice" of labor is the act of selling sex.

The systemic disposability, dispossession, and invisibility that permeate the discourses around survivors of trafficking—surviving in marginal spaces of rehabilitation processes, as their "work" stops, and their "skills" are no longer usable—are mediated through media, state agencies, NGOs, or even performers trying to embody or address the trauma and dehumanization. In a market-driven world, all rehabilitation, empowerment, and recovery efforts around trafficking become judged, even by the survivor herself, by the economic status that opens up through alternative occupations after having left the "work" that she used to perform.

Unequal economic relations have been the single greatest push factor in making female children and women vulnerable to trafficking and sex-work as a means of subsistence, where the body is considered as the only available tool for earning a living. Neoliberalism and globalization have resulted in increased demands for cheap labor including various forms of sexual labor, e.g., trafficking, forced prostitution, pornography, and other exploitative means. In such a circumstance being born as female citizens in a society which sees them as expendable and redundant creates a severe sense of dispossession.

### The Issue of Embodiment and Empowerment

I now understand that our bodies are the core of our existence—I feel so sorry that I have spent 25 years of my life constantly hating that core, and all the things it knew so well to do. (ekhon jani amar shorir ta amar mool dhon, shara ta jibon—poncheesh bochhor-shorir ta ke, aar shorir diey je kaaj kori taake ghenna korei je katiey dilam, ki hobe!)  $^{\underline{6}}$ 

The conversations about the bodies of survivors of sex trafficking are mostly hosted within the discourse of empowerment in the context of bodily violations and trauma. Roger Bechtel's work on trauma and traumatic memories, applies specifically to the scenario of the survivor. Trauma is the unprocessed or un-processable experience that manifests in disorders such as mind/body separation, uncontrollable anger, or severe depression. Roger Bechtel writes:

Traumatic memories do need to be "recovered" in order for the victim to mourn, but they are not holistic and intact, waiting anxiously for a probing therapeutic intervention to reveal them. In fact, what makes an event traumatic is one's inability to transform the lived experience into memory at the time of its occurrence. A traumatic memory, then, is not one that is hidden, but is one that is not yet made. Instead, the traumatic experience becomes trapped in the body —"possesses" the body, as Cathy Caruth puts it—for the traumatized body cannot let down its guard, the lingering activation of its "fight or flight"

response to the traumatic threat keeping it in a state of adrenalized hyperarousal.  $\overline{2}$ 

In such a situation of "hyperarousal" as mentioned by Bechtel, cognitive assimilation becomes impossible and the result is an ongoing loop where the mind tries to claim the experience, while the body's response is more defensive and could be anything starting from complete withdrawal and hyperactive processing of signals like touch, smell, look, gesture, and acts. The traumatized person is unable, thus, either to own the past or live the present. The common symptoms are flashbacks, nightmares, guilt, anger, and anxiety.

My essay examines the possibilities of changing the dynamics of the mind and body through re-visiting, re-presentation, re-construction of self-image. I am drawing here from my background fieldwork in a range of experiences such as:

- Dance and movement therapy workshops for school children and the so-called normal population;
- 2. Survival workshops and corporate well-being programs;
- 3. Performances by survivors (many times critiqued as victim-art);
- 4. Training sessions for trainees of DMT (Dance Movement Therapy) programs;
- Sessions conducted by the trainee or trained young DMT advocates, who have come out of similar circumstances of trafficking and have started working with the community; and
- 6. Mediatized re-presentations by the trauma "survivors" like films made by them or about them.

Simultaneously alongside the work of therapeutic workshops for empowerment/recovery/rehabilitation experiments, I have been looking at activism and performance works, different representations of trauma through visual art within spaces of social work, pop culture, or art. I will be drawing on these experiences in the remainder of my analyses. §

# Redefining "Work" through Dance and Movement

The social constructs of two definitive words, "victim" and "survivor" (along with the links between the embodied cognition of the survivor and that of empowerment in the context of the violations experienced by victims of sex trafficking), became important while processing my experience of working with survivors of sex-trafficking at Kolkata Sanved, which uses Dance and Movement Therapy (DMT) as a tool for rehabilitation. I have tried to understand the embodied distress of the victim, whose frame of reference to herself is the way she is framed by the society, comparing her own body and labor (work) to the existing frames of a conceptual body of the woman constructed as the regular, normal, or the perfect. In spite of many debates over issues of sex-work, or sex as work, it is difficult to make these women register themselves as resistive and subversive citizens as they tend to fall back on the common social categorization of themselves as those whose labor is itself taken as pollutant and therefore marginalizing. Thus the trauma that already is a part of the experience and that surfaces again and again as not-fully-processed memory gets reinforced in much well-meaning rehabilitation work, unless there is a specific and careful therapeutic direction towards dealing with the trauma of individual survivors.

Roger Bechtel writes about performances that works on trauma:

What is missing from the common conception of trauma is thus not simply an accurate account of the role of memory, but the understanding that trauma is an affliction not only of the psyche, but also of the body. Unfortunately, aesthetic representations of trauma, whether of the pop-culture or high-art

variety, all too often reinforce the misconception by reprocessing it, exploiting the inherently dramatic elements of the stereotype of trauma—recognition, reversal, the demon within—and using trauma as a convenient narrative trope.<sup>2</sup>

#### Survival

The extremely repetitive and often violent structure of sex work as a livelihood induces a sense of disconnection between the body and the mind of the women. Thus being rescued does not necessarily automatically mean survival. Survival in the case of the rescued trafficked victims means to arrive at a (more or less) sustained state of being away from the death grip of the situation of slavery, and to be in control of their future. For survivors of such a severely dehumanized mental and physical landscape, Dance and Movement Therapy has been used as a tool to establish a conversation between the self and body, and to re-adjust the self-body-work dynamic. In this process, recovery means a realm of possibilities that the therapeutic encounters are able to create by focusing on building a different self-image of the survivor's body, her relationship with it, and her reclamation of the work it can do. In this context, to move systematically in a therapeutic workshop for many survivors is to acknowledge their bodies in their physical locations, composition, existing musculature, strength, weakness, pain, heaviness, and other physical conditions. To dance is to extend that physicality into specific directions, to find systems of moving within the body, to acknowledge effort, to channel energy—and to feel, emote, and also to acknowledge processes that connect what one feels with what one expresses through bodily and facial expressions. That is a lot of "work" and that chain of work can then easily extend to more and more challenges—expressing yet-unspoken words through bodies, or moving for reasons beyond survival. This process, most importantly, helps create another definition of work for the previously violated body for shaping the dramaturgy of rehabilitation and a life beyond it.

It is important to acknowledge that a lot depends on the survivors' ability (many times through the help that one could get from therapeutic encounters) to perform and celebrate this journey away from victimhood—for a consistent length of time so that it becomes a habit—of thinking beyond vulnerability and victimhood with growing self-confidence. Therefore it is the performance of "surviving" that becomes one of the key factors in re-routing one's relationship with one's own body and helps situate it in the so-called "everyday" situation. In my research, I continue to look at the roles of embodied practices as tools to address the vulnerability factor, which can then shape the case-specific dramaturgy of rehabilitation, to access the differential referencing of strains of the past life in the life beyond rehabilitation. I suggest here that shifting locations from victimhood to empowerment and recovery of selfhood silently surpass one in-between location, that of the location of the survivor, where there is an important registering of the huge capability of the woman herself: to have taken the final step out of her "everything is lost" state of hopelessness to "I can survive—if I can hold on to this new found strength" stage of being.



Photo credit: Amy Parish, courtesy of Kolkata Sanved.

# (En)countering Memory: Performance of Victimhood to Performance of Empowerment

The biggest violence that is registered by many of the survivors is that of being denied authority over one's own body. These women share a systemic disposability and invisibility, as the business relies on the victim's illegality and criminality to generate maximum revenues; this is aggravated by repressive state apparatuses on every side of the trafficking scheme.

Therefore it is important to understand that the shift from embodiment to empowerment has to be a process involving detailed work in a script (I choose to call it "dramaturgy" as in this case it is to be used as the background work for the therapeutic process or the performance). The dramaturgy essentially needs to have two layers. One important part is to locate the victim's body (with its problematic vulnerabilities stemming from distorted self-image, fear, anger, negative sexuality, distancing mechanisms, and reactions to touch) in a space with other vulnerable bodies. <sup>10</sup> These body stories that are part of these therapeutic sessions are replete with reactions to nearness/touch/feeling that get communicated as bodies move together. The roots of such actions and reactions may be located in different histories of violations, and generated from very different memories of vulnerability. Connecting such bodies of difference through the second layer of dramaturgical manipulations thus becomes a challenge for such recovery processes.

For example, for many participants of survival/recovery workshops, the usual reaction was a sense of disconnection, disrespect toward one's own body, and a problem of coping with proximity to other bodies. To make oneself invisible by crouching and putting one's head down between knees or sitting with one's back towards the room were some of the common reactions when asked to occupy a space.

In the same group, some women were more confident and could be termed as initiators. Some participants came forward and took initiatives to volunteer and try out processes introduced in the workshop, while for some others, even holding hands with other participants took a long time. The shared space created a sense of comfort which also helped processes of changing texts of embodiment for participants.

The body is always in movement. And no two bodies move in the same way. The vulnerability factor becomes evident with subtle and small changes in expressions, contractions of muscles, stiffening of the spine, and almost indiscernible shifts in postures. When the therapeutic activities succeed in changing the relationship between the body

and the mind of the survivor, one can observe six emerging themes of empowerment and changing definitions of "work." First, from disconnectedness or rejection of the body there emerges familiarization with and liking of one's own body—through movements that replace painful associations with violence with a sense of security and control and belonging to the present. This change is motivated by movement exercises that start and develop a systematic acknowledgement of body parts and connection to them. Second, from a sense of guilt and marginalization, one can experience a sense of being empowered and free to express through the uses of dance and movement. This opening up occurs literally and physically, through walking, sharing space, and mirroring. Third, from movements which are light and indirect reflecting a lack of confidence, self-assurance, and grounding, the process changes them to confident, direct movements, taking responsibility and pleasure in self-confident moves. These changes are visible in the mirroring exercises with partners in DMT workshops that increase confidence and empathy for others, and enhance emotional understanding through increased use of the mirror neuron system. 11



Workshop on body awareness. Photo credit: Urmimala Sarkar Munsi, courtsey of Kolkata Sanved.

Fourth, many women talk about being tired of speaking about pain and deprivation to justify their involvement in the sex trade with stories of horror. They find it a great relief to instead move and bring out their feelings through their bodies. Superimposing a pleasurable experience of the body through movements over an existing uneasy relationship with it is one of the powerful potentials of "performing" empowerment. They experience this change through reclaiming their selves and bodies through happy, sad, light, heavy, big, small movements that come to establish a grammar of "pleasure" instead of "pleasing." Fifth, from a state of constant anxiety in which many of the survivors can never close their eyes or relax even while lying on the ground, there arises a sense of community and kinesthetic empathy. Movement induces "calming down" processes in persons whose sense of marginalization ranges from being without a state or a sense of home, complete or partial disconnection from family, to neurotic fear, psychosis, or anger. The constant enactment through performance of the word "freedom" (of the body, mind, and most importantly of any choice that the person wants to make) can create extensive and lasting confidence, a sense of resolution, and a long term vision of the future. Finally,

from having guilt, stigma, anxiety, depression, and self-induced blockages of memory and expressivity, to moving together with verbal and non-verbal kinetic engagement, leads to the creation of a communal intimacy among a group of survivors coming together in a Dance and Movement Therapy session. Group exercises, help exercises, sharing the "work" of creating a movement sequence, improvisations on storytelling, sharing of movements of vulnerability and risking coming out of it—while in a group, others are also going through the same process—increases the sense of self-worth as women feel part of a shared time, space, and work process moving beyond the past together.

In terms of these six shifts, a sense of confidence in the preliminary stage after the rescue is transitory. Constant residual "holding back" is experienced side-by-side with the elation of finding the new self, until the process normalizes the reference points and connections between the body-subject and the body-object over prolonged performative journeys. This is where the creation of a personalized healing text becomes essential. To move from "I fear..." to "I am not afraid of..." and from "I was..." to "I can...," one needs a dramaturgy capable of creating one's own route to a sustained sense of healing and alternative definition of "work."

## Conclusion: Re-working Life

Redefining the self after rescue and rehabilitation is a time-consuming process, where progress is often marred or hampered by setbacks. An ongoing and processual well-being program has been seen as the only way to keep the path of recovery as smooth and continuous as possible. It is commonly asserted that the process of recovery consists of stages to improve social skills, self-awareness, and enhancing one's connection with one's own bodily activities. Though there are a number of arguments regarding the appropriate terminology or the status to be accorded to all activities that were previously grouped under "prostitution," the shift to the more recent term "sex-work" does not take care of the social conditioning that the survivors create for themselves through their interactions with the outside world. A large part of what the survivors think of themselves also comes from the use they put their bodies to, as the space to be rented out for short or long durations. Bringing the mind back into the body is easier said than done, unless processual activation and actual exercises of inhabiting the body are introduced to them as available skills. Thus it is important to make available concrete tools for creating mind-body connectivity through a system of default mechanisms. Activating an alternate sense of work through systematic and therapeutic use of movements and dance becomes easily understandable by the survivors, as the tangible sense of activity and exhaustion is immediate and inevitable. This physical activation process is accompanied by awareness of the building activities of dialogues and individual/group reflections—whereby subconscious activities and motivations may be discussed and assimilated as a more permanent sense of achievement. The convincing of the body and mind may require different time-engagements for different survivors, but the process yields results and is considered by most therapists as well worth a try. This research serves to highlight the necessity of providing paths for survivors to reclaim their bodies and redefine their ability to be productive as a counterbalance to the injustices they have suffered as trafficked women, unprotected by the state, and often uncared for by society.

#### **Notes**

1. Rita, (name changed). Delhi, January, 2015. This excerpt is from an interview which is a part of a series of interviews conducted, recorded, transcribed, and translated by the author in person. Most of these women agreed to give interviews only on condition of anonymity, or wanted to use other names. They brought up repeatedly

the issue of "work" and their definition or attitude toward what they see as their body as their tool/source of skill. All translations are mine.

- 2. Soroptimist International of the Americas started as a club in 1921, and since then has grown into a popular, global volunteer movement working together to transform the lives of women and girls. They currently have over eighty-thousand club members from 132 countries. Their website provides volunteering opportunities all over the world for working on projects on issues like sanitation, sexual violence, displacement, and education, etc. "Sex Slavery/Trafficking: Frequently Asked Questions," Soroptimist website, accessed February 18, 2016, http://www.soroptimist.org/trafficking/faq.html.
- 3. Prabha Kotiswaran, "Born Unto Brothels-Toward a Legal Ethnography of Sex Work in an Indian Red-Light Area," *Law of Social Inquiry*, 33, no. 3 (2008), 579-629, SOAS School of Law Research Paper No. 07/2010, accessed February 15, 2016, <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1636966">http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1636966</a>.
- 4. Nivedita Menon describes the effect of sexual violence by saying "its harmful effect lying not so much in the physical assault, but in the transgression of the victim's conceptions of selfhood and sovereignty." Nivedita Menon, *Recovering Subversion: Feminist Politics Beyond the Law* (Illinois: University of Illinois, 2004), 141. See also, "Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 48/104. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women," United Nations A/RES/48/104, 1993, accessed March 10, 2016, <a href="http://www.un-documents.net/a48r104.htm">http://www.un-documents.net/a48r104.htm</a>. This defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in pubic or in private life."
- 5. Eve Ensler's interview was published in *The Telegraph* while Ensler was in Kolkata in 2014, as one of the organizers for the event DANCE FOR REVOLUTION, jointly organized by Kolkata Sanved in collaboration with the American Centre and St. Xavier's College. Chandrima S. Bhattacharya, "Dance To Reclaim The Body," *The Telegraph* Calcutta, India, December 20, 2014, accessed January 15, 2015, <a href="http://www.telegraphindia.com/1141220/jsp/calcutta/story\_4383.jsp#.vy61wPl97IU">http://www.telegraphindia.com/1141220/jsp/calcutta/story\_4383.jsp#.vy61wPl97IU</a>. Also see the facts she quoted from "Unite to End Violence Against Women," United Nations, February 2008, accessed February 18, 2016, <a href="http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/pdf/VAW.pdf">http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/pdf/VAW.pdf</a>.
- Meena (Name changed), Mumbai, August, 2014. This translated excerpt is from an unstructured, recorded, and transcribed interview conducted by the author in August, 2014 in Mumbai.
- 7. Roger Bechtel, "The Body of Trauma: Empathy, Mourning, and Media in Troika Ranch's *Loopdiver*," *Theatre Journal* 65, no. 1 (2013): 77.
- 8. One important example of a particular project that I would like to refer to in this context is a project named "Transforming Steps" initiated by a non-governmental organization, Kolkata Sanved, in Kolkata and Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, in March 2012. Six dancers from Kolkata Sanved went through a program of workshops and training with two choreographers provided by Sadler's Wells as a part of the Sadler's Wells Connect Festival. The dancers from Kolkata Sanved took part in this project aimed at raising awareness of human trafficking. The 'Transforming Steps' project coincided with the London Olympics and was aimed at raising awareness about the increase in human trafficking during major sporting events. A series of workshops, movement practices, and choreographic encounters

were conducted both in Kolkata as well as in London. The survivors (young girls rescued from trafficking) received training in videography and created short videos as part of this project, which were then edited to be made into a film and shown during the same time in London. The performance itself took place at the Lillian Baylis Studio in London. "Kolkata Sanved dancers perform at the Sadler's Wells Connect Festival," Paul Hamlyn Foundations News, March 27, 2012, accessed May 8, 2016, <a href="http://www.phf.org.uk/news/kolkata-sanved-dancers-perform-sadlers-wells-connect-festival/">http://www.phf.org.uk/news/kolkata-sanved-dancers-perform-sadlers-wells-connect-festival/</a>.

- 9. Bechtel, "The Body Of Trauma," 77.
- 10. Most activities, including those as intimate as the act of bathing, are conducted in shared spaces using sparse facilities. Hence, even in terms of therapy, group works are important. It is also a reality that given the lack of support, space, time, and adequate funding, such therapeutic sessions are possible only in groups in most cases. Grouping together bodies with different issues of vulnerability for sessions of therapy becomes a most difficult yet necessary task. The varied sources of vulnerability create different mind-body dynamics in the participants. Though the facilitator gets to work with a group of women in a shared space for a specific time period, these women need to be essentially taken as bodies of difference. Hence the task of the facilitator is essentially to work on creating a community, but constantly to keep in mind the struggle that may be going on within the individual participants in working with other bodies that react very differently. In India, in most lower income group families, women grow up with very little sense of individual space.
- 11. Using mirroring often helps in enhancing the sense of the surroundings, by helping the subject to focus on the other body with focused concentration. Mirroring activates a group of specialized neurons which mirror the movements and actions of others. The activation of the mirror neuron system is said to facilitate social cognition, empathetic understanding, and communicative skills. Often used in standard dance and theatre training, mirroring is used as a tool to enhance interpersonal communications and observational capacities. Giovanni Buccino, Ana Solodkin, and Steven L. Small, "Functions of the Mirror Neuron System: Implications for Neurorehabilitation." *Cognitive Behavioural Neurology* 19, no.1 (2006), 55–63.

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